DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 137 960 EA 009 438

AUTHOR Fredrick, Len
TITLE Ways to Improve Your School Food Services Program.
INSTITUTION Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nev.
PUB DATE 25 Feb 77
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Administrators (109th, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 25-28, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Food Service; *Food Standards; *Lunch Programs; Nutrition
IDENTIFIERS *Clark County Nevada School District

ABSTRACT

The speaker describes the fast food operation he has implemented in his school district. The program has increased the number of lunches served, reduced costs to the students, eliminated waste, shows a surplus, and meets federal standards for Type A lunches. The program features special sandwiches, milkshakes, and fries. (IRT)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

ED137960

PRESENTER: Len Fredrick, Foodservice Department, Clark County Schools,
, Las Vegas, NV
TOPIC: Ways To Improve Your School Food Services Program
TIME: Friday, Feb. 25, 8:00 a.m.
PLACE: Room 2, Convention Center
PROGRAM: Page 17

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The topic of our meeting today is "Ways to Improve Your School Food Services Program." The number one way is: Make your school cafeteria A FUN PLACE TO EAT. How do you do this? You do it with the introduction of fast food in your school cafeterias.

In the February 1977 issue of Family Health magazine, General Foods has a full page ad. There is a cartoon drawing of a mother and son at a table. The boy is obviously being persuaded to eat something his mother feels is necessary to his good health. After one bite, he grabs his throat with both hands and gasps "Help! I'm turning green. How long before I can stop eating food that's good for me."

Many people believe that if a medicine doesn't taste bad it isn't good for you. Likewise, many foodservice directors believe that if you give kids food they like it can't be good for them.

I say give students the foods they want and will eat, even the lunch that's number one with every teenager--a milk shake, an order of french fries, and a hamburger. The way we make it, it's good for them. We also offer them 15 other fast food lunches that are good for them and we offer all of them every school day of the year. They are all Type A lunches, too!

Over 500 people from school districts in 48 states and Canada have made inquiries either by phone, by letter, or in person about our Fast Food Combo program that has been so successful in our school luncheterias here in Las Vegas.

Cahners Publishing Company of Boston, Massachusetts asked me to write a book about our school lunch program and my talk today comes largely from Chapter 1 of this book which is titled Fast Food Gets an "A" in School Lunch. The other 15 chapters in the book detail how to implement a fast food program, but from what I am going to tell you today, you will get an overall picture of the fast food program in school lunches including just why and how we did what we did and what has been achieved from this approach to school feeding.

Food waste, getting teenagers to eat a Type A meal, and keeping school foodservice departments in the black have been the three biggest bugaboos in the school lunch program. These three pressing problems have given foodservice directors and school superintendents everywhere many sleepless nights. The irony of this situation is that all of these problems have been entirely unnecessary. But all is not lost. There is a breath of fresh air blowing in the school lunch program. This fresh air is ushering in a revolutionary and innovative approach to feeding our teenagers. It is the fast food concept being adapted to the school cafeteria, making it a real FUN PLACE TO EAT.

According to statistics quoted by the American School Food Service Association, there were slightly over 4.66 billion Type A school lunches served in the United States in the

EA 009 435

1975-76 school year. This breaks down to approximately 26.5 million students eating a school lunch every day. About 65% or 17.5 million of these students are in grades 1 through 6 and only about 9 million in grades 7 through 12. Simple arithmetic shows us that about 8.5 million secondary school students have dropped out of the school lunch program. In other words, when students move into junior high and high school, they are no longer "turned on" by the conventional plate-of-the-day school lunch program. They want to choose the food they eat just as they choose their friends, their classes, and their activities.

Does it have to be that these 8.5 million students drop out from the school lunch program when they leave grammar school? Do our trash cans have to be full of discarded food? Do school lunch programs have to operate in the red? The answer to all of these questions is "No." But to reverse this trend of teenage lunch dropouts, food waste, and red ink, our conventional antiquated methods of feeding students must be replaced with modern, innovative concepts. It is not an impossible task, and I would like to share with you my ideas of how we can get them back into the school cafeterias and keep food out of those trash cans. Chances are, these 8.5 million teenagers are not drinking milk, but if we could get them back to school for lunch, we could get them to drink the milk shake which actually contains more body building nutrients than a glass of whole milk.

I must confess at this point that I am nothing but a retired business administrator. Before I took the job as foodservice director for Clark County School District five years ago, I had never prepared a Type A school lunch in my life. But what at first appeared to be a handicap later turned out to be a blessing in disguise for I was able to view the situation from a new perspective and implement innovative ideas to accomplish the main purpose of the school lunch program: to get more students to eat a nutritious and healthful lunch.

Raising participation, serving nutritional meals, eliminating food waste, giving the kids the foods they want, and staying in the black is a school foodservice director's dream. This was our dream--an impossible dream to many--yet our dream came true. Your dream can come true also, even if money--or the lack of it--is your biggest problem.

I agree with Philip Gramm, Professor of Economics at Texas A & M that money does not solve problems; ideas solve problems. We have had the good fortune to be successful in the many bold and innovative ideas we put into our foodservice operation in the last few years. As a result, student participation in our Type A program has taken off like a kite in a March wind. Our P & L statements show that we are also building a very comfortable surplus.

I am sure you have all noticed that many secondary school students are not particularly wild about the traditional Type A meal. In an open campus situation, students often leave campus at noon just to get away--but many of them also leave to get the foods they want to eat.

We have capitalized on this. No food is so popular with young people as the All-American hamburger, french fries, and milk shake. This menu is the basis for our original Super Shake and our Nevad'n Combo--which is just another way of saying Type A meal.

We introduced the Super Shake as an alternate for the 1/2 pint of milk and the Combo as an alternate for the conventional Type A plate on the school lunch program in the fall of 1973 in all of our secondary schools. Almost overnight they were a rousing success. This prompted us to introduce a 15-Combo menu, eliminating completely the Type A "plate-of-the-day" when school opened in the fall of 1974. The success of this all-Combo menu has gone way beyond our most optimistic projections.

In all 24 of our junior and senior high schools, Type A meal participation (Combos, to us) jumped a dramatic 112% in September 1974 over the previous September. We thought this was just a "flash in the pan," but much to our delight, participation with the new Combo menu just kept getting higher. In December it was up 140%, and in May we had an unbelievable 205% increase over May of 1974.

In the 1973-74 school year we served 3/4 of a million more lunches than the previous year. In 1974-75 we had an additional increase of one million lunches. Again, in the 1975-76 school year there was another increase of one million lunches. Though it sounds like a broken record to repeat, once again this year we will be up another million lunches.

You will find, as we have, that increased participation means increased federal reimbursement and larger volume means lower labor cost and the end result will be a foodservice program showing a very comfortable surplus in every P & L statement.

Many of you are concerned with the competition to your secondary school lunch program from off campus fast food restaurants. You are not alone. Way back in November of 1974 two magazines--Institutions and Nation's Schools and Colleges--cited the growing number of college campuses being invaded by commercial fast food operations and the number climbs steadily. McDonald's heads the list of invaders. Both of these magazines featured articles about how commercial fast foodservice operations can save the school luncheteria from bankruptcy.

By the way, I believe in free enterprise and wish McDonald's and other fast food operators every success, but you can do everything they can do and make money doing it. We did it, and here is how.

After surveys were conducted to see what the students were going off campus to buy, and after much consideration, we made an agonizing decision to discontinue the conventional Type A plate and go to fast foods in all of our junior and senior high school luncheterias, realizing, of course, that we also had an obligation to serve a nutritious lunch.

We created our own version of Arby's hot roast beef sandwich and McDonald's Big Mac hamburger, and so on. We gave the new hot sandwiches catchy names such as the Big Tex'n, Big Virginian, Big Nevad'n, etc. These sandwiches were served in fancy styrofoam boxes that kept them piping hot and the boxes were dolled up with attractive labels in various colors.

To further carry out the Madison Avenue technique, the employees were given matching colored promotional buttons to wear and we supplied the luncheterias with eye catching multicolored posters.

The students also wanted milk shakes, so we developed one that was recognized in Nevada as a Type A beverage and that could replace the conventional 1/2 pint of milk in a school lunch--a first for the nation. Then we said, "Move over, McDonald's; move over, Taco Bell; move over, Pizza Parlor; move over, Arby's; move over, Frostee Freeze; and here we come!"

Soon these hot sandwiches, along with other favorite entree items, became the basis for our expanded Combo menu. Almost any sandwich can become a Type A lunch with the addition of vitamin C enriched french fries and lettuce, or a tossed green salad, plus a milk shake or milk.

High school students who normally wouldn't be caught dead eating a conventional Type A plate are eating the Combos as though they were going out of style. They are eating every bite of the sandwich and of the french fries and are drinking every last drop of the milk shake. Food waste is a thing of the past. These students don't have the faintest idea they are getting the recommended nutrition for their noon lunch and many of them couldn't care less.

What we did was take food that teenagers like and make it good for them. Remember that in the 30-year history of the National School Lunch Program, a 1/2 pint of milk has been the only beverage that could be served with a Type A lunch. I theorized that if I could serve a milk shake that had more milk nutrients in it than there is in whole milk, I could get government approval for the milk shake and at the same time bring teenage school lunch dropouts back into the school lunch program. What we in Clark County Foodservices have done is start a revolution in school feeding. A revolution not to hurt or destroy, but to build and improve.

Periodically the nation goes through different health food fads and food scares. There are some nutritionists today who say that a fast food diet for children is horrendous. They say that to have a large share of the calories consumed come from sugar and fat and only a small share from protein is what is wrong with our diets today. Some say this kind of a diet will give one an early appointment with the undertaker.

Let's look at some interesting statistics. In 1910 the average child could expect to grow to a height of 5'5" and live to be 50 years old. Today's average child can expect to grow to a height of 5'9" and live to be 71 years old. Now if the food we are eating is poison to the system, then this must be the best poison on the market when the kids who are eating it can expect to grow 4" taller and live 21 years longer than their counterparts of 65 years ago.

What about the so called excessive use of sugars and fats in our present fast food diets? Refined sugars are merely pure forms of sugar that have been extracted from the plant foods in which they are found. Fat is one of the richest sources of energy in our diets and along with sugars they provide us with approximately 80% of our calorie requirements. Mr. Roland M. Deutsch, a recognized authority on nutrition and author of The Family Guide to Better Food and Health says that it is wrong to assume that a diet high in protein is automatically providing one with good nutrition.

Today, doctors have discovered (a little late, I think) that mother's milk from a normal, healthy mother is the finest food there is for a baby. Doctors now say that for the first six months a baby needs nothing but mother's milk. I guess the Lord knew what he was doing when he made women.

Now the shocker. What is mother's milk made of? Human milk is about 48% sugar calories, 46% fat calories, and only 6% protein calories. That's right. Therefore, we would have to conclude that the healthiest babies in the world--the breast fed ones--are on a fast food diet the minute they are born, and they stay on it exclusively for six months --for every breakfast, every lunch, every dinner, and for that midnight snack, too.

Seriously speaking, after receiving much information and advice from some of the leading nutritionists in our country, I can see that our diets, as nutritious as they are, can stand some improving. I have written more about this later on in the book.

To accomplish what we have done in Nevada we had to make many changes--do lots of innovating. When you try new ideas you must make a path where no path has been before. There are bound to be a few branches across the way--sometimes a big tree or two, but the satisfaction of accomplishment makes it all worthwhile. Not many years ago our luncheterias were half empty at noon, but now they are so crowded that our School Board is spending several million dollars to enlarge and modernize many of our school eating areas.

Our innovative concept of school lunch--the Combo with the Super Shake--is being copied by many school districts throughout the nation and soon millions of teenagers will enjoy better nutrition because of this new school lunch program. Much favorable publicity, particularly from the trade magazines, has helped make this possible. Several articles have referred to the large financial surplus we have accumulated and I believe it is possible for other school districts to receive these same benefits--which was one of my purposes in writing the book. Many school districts are in a financial crunch and one thing they don't need is a foodservice operation that is losing money, necessitating contributions from already strained general funds.

Our success has not been without its problems, however. As our volume started to climb, our overhead went down and soon our profit and loss statements showed a very sizeable surplus. Then one day it happened. My boss, the Associate Superintendent, came into my office. He gave me a hard look and said, "What in the world are you doing with over a half million dollar surplus in your foodservice account?"

He continued, "You're not in private business anymore, remember. Your foodservice program is supposed to be non-profit. This large surplus is embarrassing. Let's do something to whittle it down."

First, we got the School Board to give a special bonus raise to all of the 450 foodservice employees. What happened? The employees worked harder than ever. Result: our payroll actually decreased, but our large surplus did not decrease. Next, we got the Board to do the unthinkable thing in today's economy--reduce prices. All Type A lunches and Combos in all schools, grades 1 through 12, were reduced in price by 5¢.

What happened? Our volume continued to soar even higher, thereby further decreasing our overhead, and wouldn't you know, that embarrassingly large surplus still wouldn't go away.

Then the Board gave us permission to spend $500,000 of foodservice money on new and replacement equipment that was badly needed in all of our kitchens. What happened? Much of this new equipment was of the labor-saving type. You guessed it. Our productivity shot up and our labor percentage cost dropped again. I guess I just can't do anything right. That surplus, as big as ever, is still staring at us from all of our P & L statements. But I will not give up; I will not be called a failure. We have many more innovative ideas ready to be put into effect and one of them has just got to reduce that embarrassingly large surplus.

Among the new ideas receiving wide acceptance is the multiple choice fast food breakfast. These breakfasts, called Super Chargers, qualify for full federal reimbursement under the school lunch program and are in competition with the Egg McMuffin and Breakfast Jack. The Super Chargers sell for 25 to 35 cents including orange juice and a 1/2 pint of milk with the sandwiches. Fast food will get you an "A" in your school breakfast program, too.

Our large financial surplus enabled us to keep 1972 lunch prices through the 1975-76 school year, so a surplus can be a rather nice problem to have. In Marietta, Ohio, the Board of Education voted to abolish cafeteria service for this year because the foodservice department ran $60,000 in the red last year and the Board says it can't afford this loss any longer. Closing cafeterias doesn't seem the best solution to getting out of the red. Children need to eat lunch and if they can't get a nutritious one at school the alternative is too often junk food. With a willingness to make changes and initiate good management, it is possible to have the best of two worlds: a balanced budget and nutritious school lunches that students like. The fast food concept--Combo with Super Shake--made us a very comfortable surplus.

Many of you will come up with new and better ideas to improve school foodservices. These ideas must be shared so that by combining our energy and our talents we can reach a common goal--a goal that says participation in the school lunch program in our secondary schools will be doubled or trebled in the next two years. The idea of doubling or tripling teenage participation is not an impossible dream. It can happen. After all, getting teenagers to eat nutritious food should be the name of the game.

I have found, though, that most people are afraid of change and if they are confronted with a revolutionary, innovative program to replace an old one, they sometimes go into shock. A fast food program is actually easier to operate than the conventional Type A plate program and the only trouble foodservice directors will have is spending the surplus money that will build up in the foodservice funds. Fast food will get anybody an "A" in the school lunch program.

Do you still have a few lingering doubts about going fast food (Combo with Super Shake) in your school district? Then the following facts and figures showing the results of our fast food school lunch operation should be the clincher to make you a believer in our program.

Over these last four-and-a-half years we have spent approximately 1.2 million dollars out of foodservice earnings on new kitchen equipment, trucks, etc., giving us some of the most modern and efficiently operated school luncheterias in the country. Even after this large expenditure for foodservice equipment, we are still very comfortably in the black.

We all know that school foodservice operations are nonprofit. But when you can show a "net earnings" in your P & L statements, this money can and should be used for some and maybe all of the following improvements in your school lunch program.

1. To help absorb inflation cost of food and supplies and thus enable you to keep lunch and breakfast prices as low as possible.

2. To improve both the quality and the quantity of food served, plus adding new items to the menu that otherwise you just would not be able to afford.

3. To purchase new and improved equipment for school kitchens that will help to give quicker service and, in some instances, even better tasting food to the students.

4. To give a fair and deserving raise to hard working foodservice personnel.

Profit is not a dirty word. Profit can and should be used to help improve the school lunch program which will in turn improve student participation. By using our net earnings wisely, we were able to achieve the phenomenal increase in student participation in school lunch and breakfast programs shown by the growth pattern memo that was handed out to you when you came into this meeting. Will you please refer to this memo now.

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT CC-52A

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Edward A. Greer

FROM: Len Fredrick DATE: January 27, 1977

SUBJECT: Foodservice Growth Patterns

The following chart reveals actual numbers and types of meals prepared, reimbursement, and total dollar volume from the 1970-71 school year through the 1975-76 school year. Projected data is given for the 1976-77 school year.

Year	Type A Lunches Only	A la Carte Lunches Only	Breakfasts Served	Federal Reimbursement	Total Dollar Volume
1970-71	1,023,000*	2,545,000*	0	$ 257,000	$1,784,000
1971-72	1,972,000	2,064,000	0	$ 550,000	$2,097,000
1972-73	2,274,000	2,172,000	0	$ 638,000	$2,555,000
1973-74	2,906,000	2,223,000	137,500	$ 821,000	$3,346,000
1974-75	4,094,000	2,156,000	792,000	$1,533,000	$4,450,000
1975-76	5,085,000	1,750,000	1,600,000	$2,040,000	$5,235,000
1976-77	6,150,000	1,450,000*	1,900,000	$2,400,000	$6,400,000

*Notice how the Type A lunch has increased from 1 million to 6 million while the a la carte lunch has decreased from 2 1/2 million to only 1 1/2 million over the past 6 years.

A projected total of 9 1/2 million meals (Type A, a la carte, and breakfast) will be served in Clark County Schools this school year.

LF:jg

From these figures you see that in the 1970-71 school year we served 1 million Type A lunches in the Clark County School District. This year we will serve 6 million Type A lunches. Add to that 1 1/2 million a la carte lunches and 2 million government approved breakfasts and we will serve 9 1/2 million meals this year.

In the 1970-71 school year, our federal reimbursement was 1/3 million dollars and this year it will be 2.4 million dollars. This year our total dollar volume will be 6.4 million dollars.

This is big business. A foodservice director in a large school district needs training and experience in business administration. I am considered a maverick in school foodservices

because I don't believe that just more government money will solve all our problems. We must come up with new ideas that will make the school cafeteria A FUN PLACE TO EAT. We must run our operations more efficiently. We must keep foodservices in the black. We need fewer government regulations and more freedom to use innovative programs that will put food in children's stomachs instead of in trash cans.

When the school lunch program was instituted more than 30 years ago, the purpose was to give growing children nutritious food and that purpose, I believe, has not changed. The more we can do to increase the number of students participating, the more good that can be accomplished through the program. It is to this end that I have directed my energies. Getting more students to eat nutritious food is still the name of the game.

Over and over I have heard from administrators that they would gladly relinquish the responsibility of the school lunch program to someone who would serve students the foods they like and want and who would keep the foodservice operation in the black. The administrators feel, and rightly so, that they have their share of problems overseeing the academic part of a school district which is, of course, their primary responsibility. As a result, there is a growing interest now for school foodservice contract management firms with expertise in serving fast food to teenagers--fast food that meets the Type A requirements. But I am convinced that this need can be met with school foodservice directors who can make the school luncheteria a real FUN PLACE TO EAT with the introduction of fast food--the Combo with the Super Shake. Yes, fast food will get you an "A" in your school lunch program.